

BLACK LIBERATION ARMY STUDY GUIDE

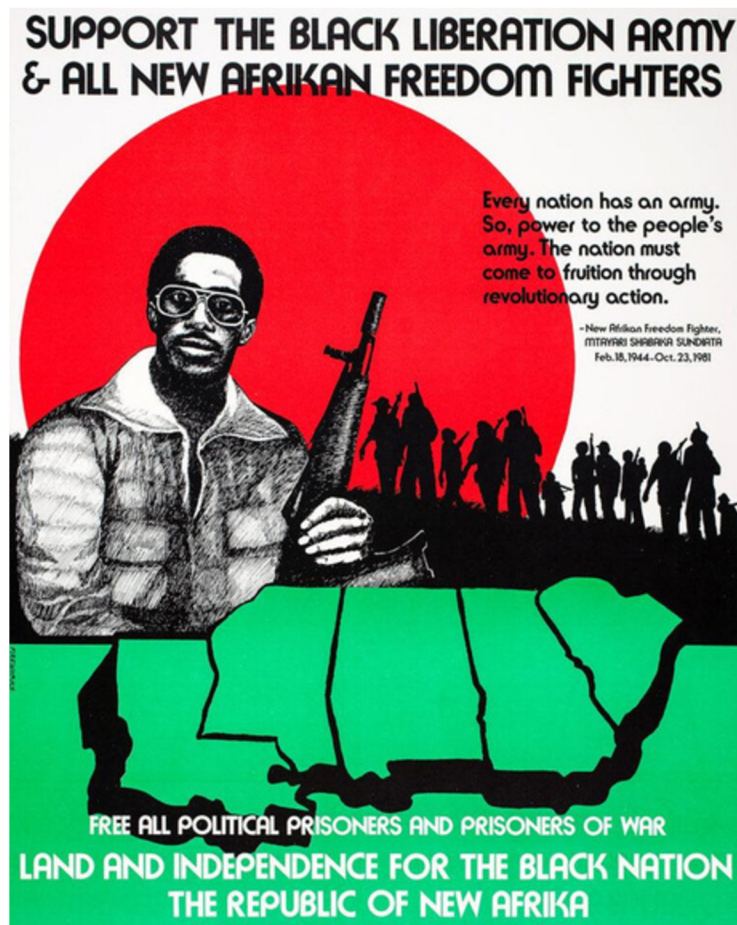


ZINE EDITION

**By All Peoples Fighting
Oppression**



-Disclaimer-



This zine summarizes key concepts from the Black Liberation Army Study guide. The intention is to make the guide's concepts more accessible and to link them to modern times. This zine does not replace the need for collective discussion or reading the full text. In fact, if you do not plan on reading the full text it is incredibly necessary to further your learning through group discussions on each topic through political education classes.

What is the BLA?

Who wrote this and why - context in the times and how they manifested

The Black Liberation Army (BLA), composed of former Black Panther and Republic of New Afrika members, was an underground organization operating in the United States from 1970 to 1981.

Their mission was to liberate BIPOC to self-determination through underground armed struggle. After years of members operating above ground in their former parties, the members recognized that it is impossible to achieve justice in a highly surveilled and controlled state where any chance at social reform is squashed by ruling powers. The FBI worked recklessly, tirelessly, and violently to dismantle the Black Panther Party. In the 1970s, they went on killing sprees of revolutionary leaders, including Fred Hampton who started the school food programs.

Using theories from communist revolutionaries, the BLA aimed to dismantle the oppressive Western systems which keep marginalized communities from becoming self-sufficient through shared resources. Some of their more radical works include the hijacking of 1972 Delta Air Lines Flight 841 and the 1981 Brink's robbery. At the base of their revolutionary acts was a love for humanity and a belief of liberation so profound that they frequently put their lives at risk to achieve their goals.

The BLA was dismantled as an organization after over a decade of relentless police raids that resulted in the deaths and imprisonment of many of their members. Despite this, their accomplishments, courage, and wisdom continue to encourage activists as we organize today.



Building, Sacramento CA. On the occasion of a hearing about restricting gun rights in response to Black Panther self-defense tactics. 1967, California

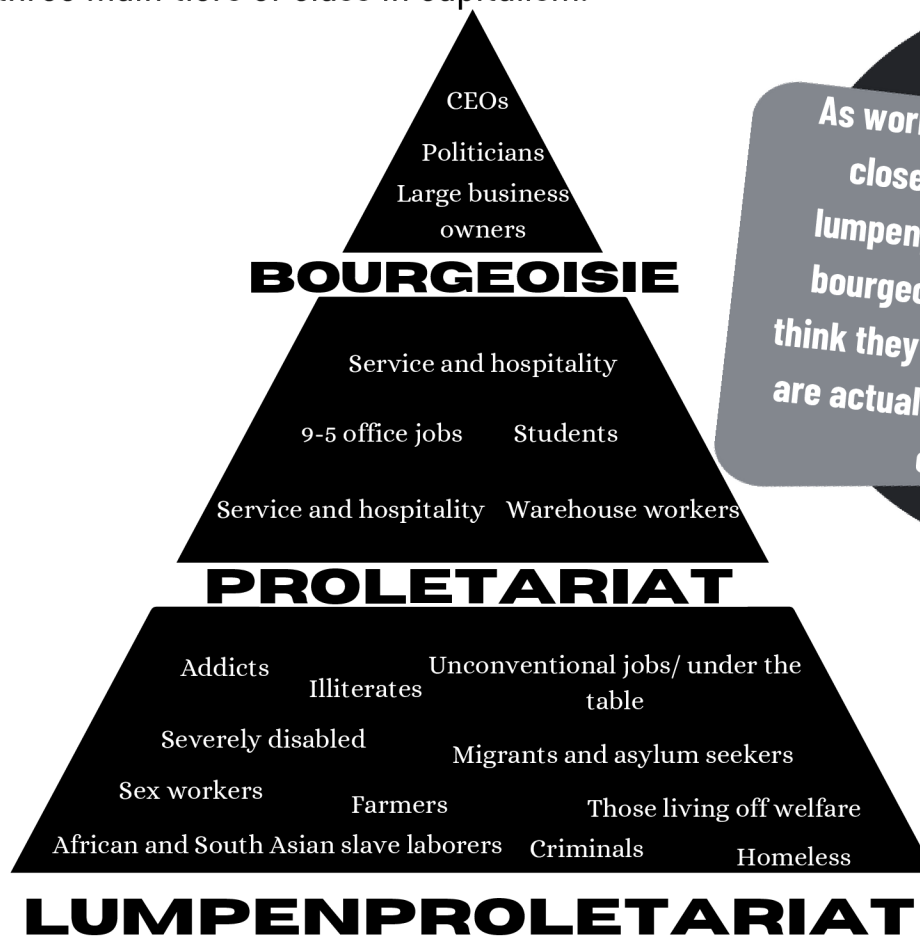


BLACK PANTHERS, TEENAGERS, AND CHILDREN ALIKE GIVE THE PANTHER BLACK POWER SALUTE OUTSIDE THEIR "LIBERATION SCHOOL" IN THE FILLMORE DISTRICT OF SAN FRANCISCO. DECEMBER 20, 1969.

What is Capitalism?

How Capitalism Affects the Average Person

Capitalism is the process of abusing and extracting natural resources to be made into goods which are then sold for purchase. We will be discussing the three main tiers of class in capitalism.



Think About It!

As workers, we're much closer to becoming lumpenproletariat than bourgeoisie. Many who think they're working class are actually in the poverty class.

Bourgeoisie

This is the highest class (AKA capitalists). They own all means of labour and production.

Proletariat

This is the working class who must earn a living by selling their labor. The workers do not possess capital or means of production.

Lumpenproletariat

This the poverty class. Those chronically jobless or receiving money through unconventional ways.

What is Capitalism?

How These Terms Apply to Modern Times

The ruling class enslaves the entire world to capitalism.

Capitalism is colonialism reformed. Both systems can only thrive for a small few through the oppression of millions. Since white men sought capital gain, they've been enslaving our brothers and sisters in the Congo to mine rubber, rechargeable batteries, artisan minerals, gold and much more. They continue to genocide Peoples Indigenous to Northern Turtle Island (a.k.a KKKanada) so that we can take the land's water, trees, and all the natural resources in between. In these ways, the violent system is integrated in all that we do and dehumanizes non-white folks to justify their exploitation.

Like colonialism, capitalism is inherently violent and racist. Those exploited and oppressed are denied access to what their people are killed for. All of their goods are exported to those who can pay 10 times what it is made for. As consumers, if we remain comfortable in our complicity, change will never come.

Think About It!

Boycotting one product, like Apple's iPhone, does not take away the exploitive system as a whole.

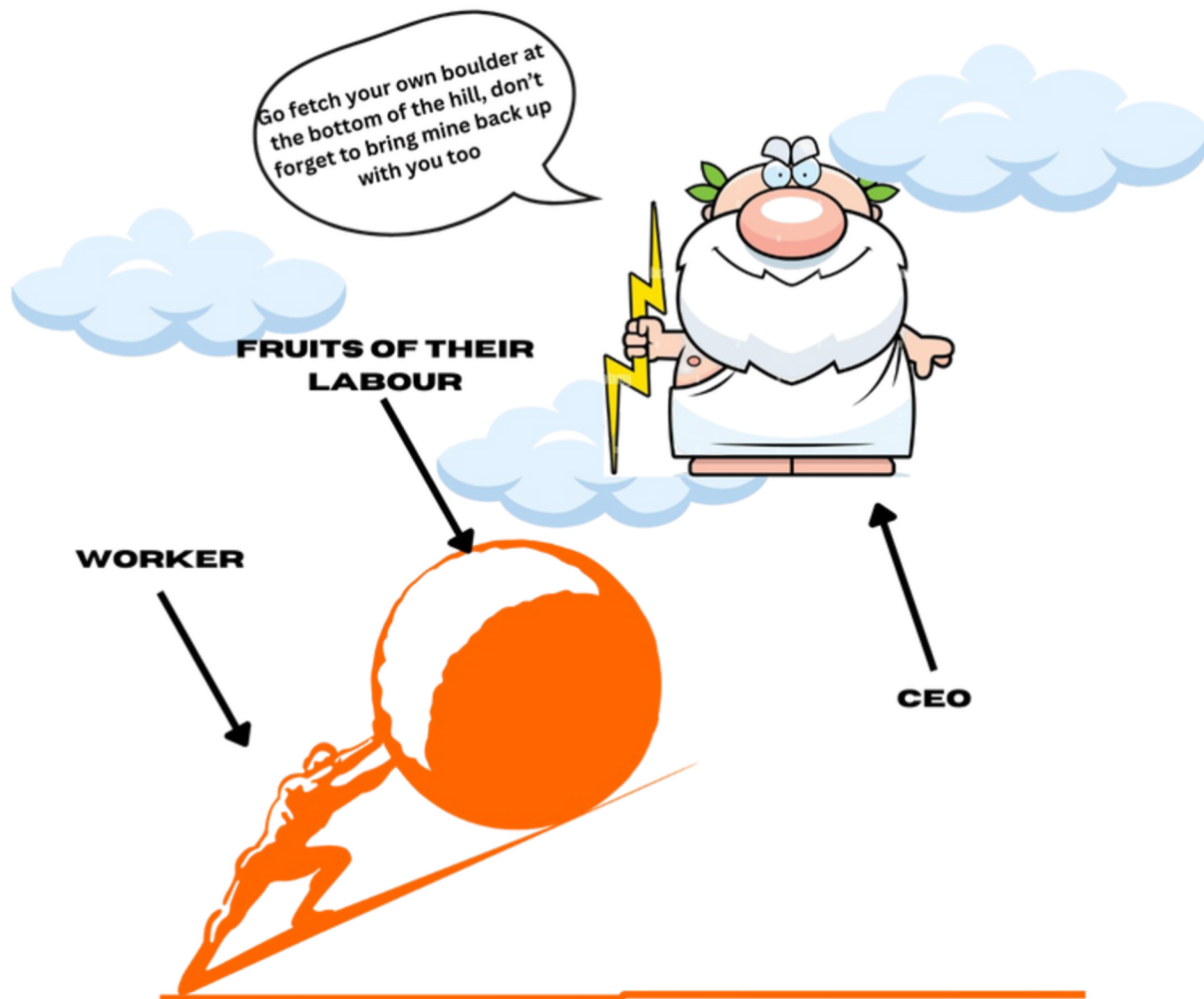
Did you know that times of war are very profitable for the bourgeoisie?

During the first few months of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, the Canadian government approved 28.5 million Canadian Dollars in new permits for military exports to Israel - Who do you think profits from the 28.5 million?



What is Capitalism?

Rest Assured, You're Being Taken Advantage of Too!



Whether you are working at a warehouse, cleaning at a 24/7 gym, a restaurant worker, night-life entertainer, or a "9-5", you are living paycheck to paycheck, making more money for your boss than they know how to spend. Meanwhile, all the money you earn goes back to them with the goods you purchase.

Capitalism harms everyone EXCEPT those who remain at the top. The unrealistic possibility of wealth is dangled in our faces, while their greed destroys our futures and the planet.

The Myth of Getting Rich

What Does Being Rich Even Mean?

Is it becoming a part of a higher tax-bracket? Becoming a millionaire or billionaire?

Either way, becoming rich makes you a menace to society! To become and stay rich you must exploit peoples' labour and the Earth's resources, and then profit from them. Let's take a look at the top 1%. Below is how much Jeff Bezos earns in USD, as Amazon's CEO:

per second: \$985

per minute: \$59,100

per hour: \$3,546,000

per day: \$85,104,00

per week: \$595,728,000

While being the reason for Bezos' wealth, his employees are paid less than 0.00001% of his income and provided no health benefits, despite working hazardous conditions.

In one instance, a worker was injured on the job, got let go, and had to raise money for medical bills on GoFundMe while homeless.



The Myth of Getting Rich

What Does Being Rich Even Mean?

Okay, say you still really want to be like Jeff Bezos... how close are you to becoming rich? LOW! With unemployment rising; the Canadian dollar dropping; minimum wage being stagnant; housing prices increasing; and all of our taxes funding Capitalism; the average worker is closer to becoming homeless than rich.

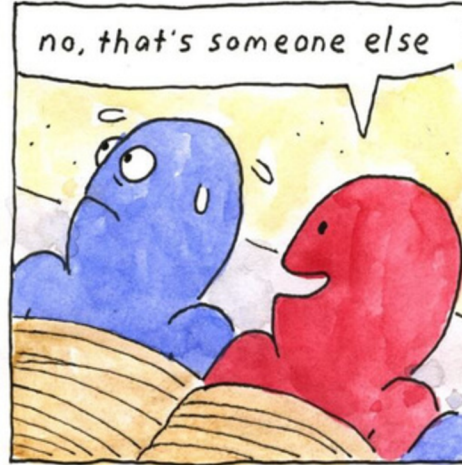
We need to rethink how we define "richness". Rather than climbing the class pyramid, we gain more when we prioritize community. Being integrated in a community whose collective goal is humanity, is rich in "revolutionary love".

If community is the answer, why does it feel so difficult to create? The bourgeois work overtime to manipulate your focus on becoming rich! Individualistic values (values that only benefit yourself rather than a group) pushed onto us through propaganda, result in a lack of confidence in our collective ability to liberate ourselves.



These values keep you alienated and in competition with your peers. Think about how the police routinely brutalize homeless people in Toronto. It's almost as if the bourgeois (who lobby the police) want to remind us (the working proletariat) to STAY IN LINE. As long as we continue to be "hard working citizens" we won't live on the street facing violence.

waking up



@alexkrokus



Gloria Richardson, head of the Cambridge Nonviolent Action Committee, pushes a National Guardsman's bayonet aside as she moves among a crowd.

So, the capitalist system is taking our money and giving it to the rich... Are they taking more from us? - The short answer, is yes!



*Aerial view of neighbourhood bombed by the Philadelphia Police Department.
1985, Philadelphia.*

Six adults died in the fire

John Africa (the founder of Move AKA Vincent Leapheart)

Frank Africa

Teresa Africa

Conrad Africa

Rhonda Africa (mother of Birdie, the only child to escape the fire)

Raymond Africa

Five children died in the fire

Tree

Netta (Tree's sister)

Deleisha

Little Phil

Tomasa

MOVE was a Black liberation advocacy group from West Philadelphia. In the 70's, MOVE held demonstrations against police brutality and justice for animals. After years of clashes against the police and arrests, the police issued a mass eviction order. On May 13, 1985, after an hours long shoot out between MOVE and the police, the Philadelphia Police Department bombed their homes. 11 people were killed, including five children. One adult (Michael) and one child (Birdie) survived. 61 homes burned down, 250 Philadelphians left homeless— a working-class black neighbourhood turned to ash by the police.

The Myth of Getting Rich

It is not uncommon for the Police to harm their own city's residents. Remember that although our taxes fund the police, their purpose is to uphold capitalism. In fact, they only "serve and protect" the bourgeoisie and their property.

In Toronto during December 2024, Mayor Olivia Chow, with the assistance of the higher levels of government, authorized a \$53 million increase in the Toronto Police Service's (TPS) budget. This brought their total budget close to 1.3 billion dollars. Meanwhile, between January 2013 and April 2024, 119 officers working for TPS were suspended, with pay, a total of 130 times amounting to a total of \$31 million for taxpayers.

The bourgeois takes away necessary resources for the poor and working class to uphold their power.

Think About It!



Where do you think \$31 million throughout 11 years could have been used?

TPS destroys homeless encampments, throwing their tents and belongings away. Simultaneously, Toronto shelters close from budget cuts. TPS actively harms their citizens while removing effective solutions for harm reduction.

Doug Ford put legislation in 2024 forward to shut down supervised harm reduction sites. These sites help save lives and prevent overdoses of community members.

As all 3 levels of government cut funding for social programs, militarization (police using violent military tactics against civilians) increases along with the police budget. Housing, affordable food, school programs, free healthcare, and community centres are all programs that would benefit from a budget increase, and would actually improve our communities.

What are the consequences for people who depend on these sites, both those who access the services and the workers?

Think About It!

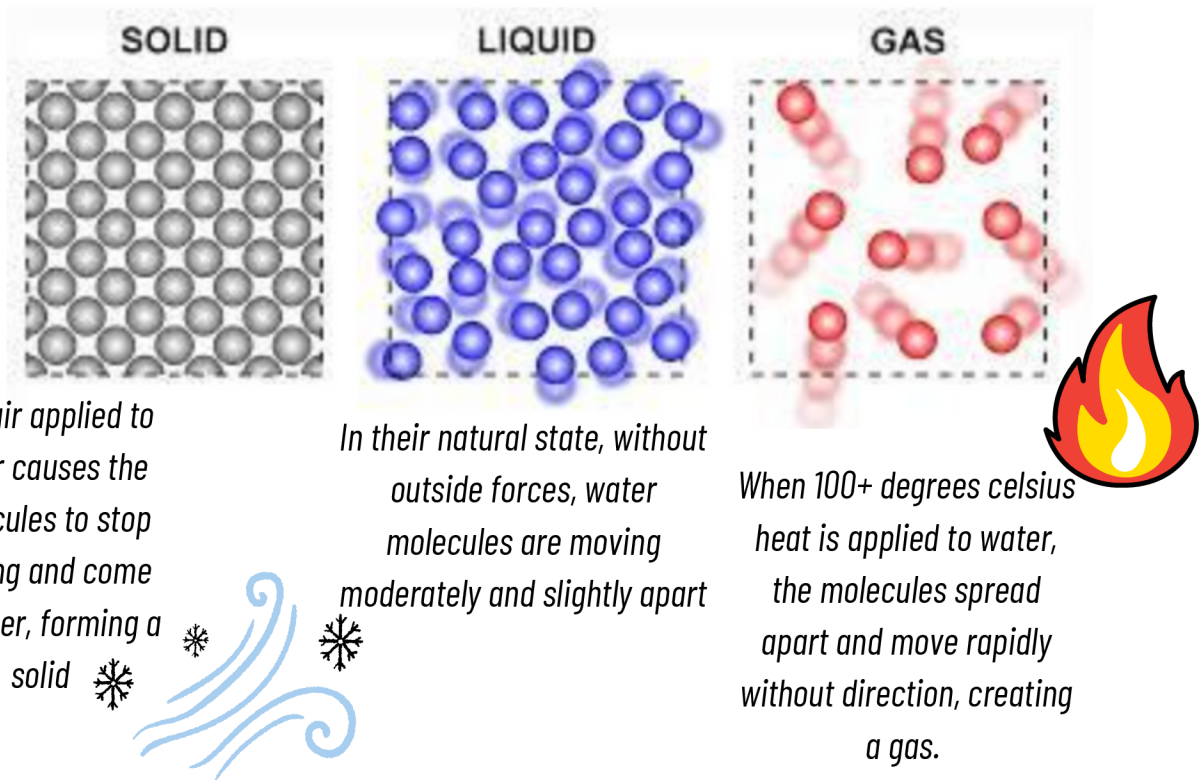


Dialectics

Found in Nature

Dialectics is a complicated philosophy that involves physics and chemistry. Attempting to summarize all of its concepts in simple examples and explanations does it an injustice, however we aim to make the concept easy to understand!

Dialectics are the changes in something from internal and external factors and contradictions which cause it to completely reinvent itself. Thus, the new material is completely separate from what it was before the transformation.



The water's molecules are the internal factors, the temperatures are the external factors, and the effect both factors have create internal contradictions which are represented by the form the water takes. Keeping this example in mind, let's apply dialectics to our community spaces.

Dialectics

Found In Movements

When looking at how misogyny influences movements, we can say that it exists as an internal contradiction, created from internal factors and influenced by external factors. The internal factors being the beliefs within the movement, the external factors being the rise of femme oppression, and the internal contradictions being present within the people and how they interact, ultimately represented by how the movement is changed.

For example, a range of people working together in activist spaces are misogynists and feminists, centrists who don't claim either side, and femmes who don't believe in feminism. The external factors influencing these people are the rise of overtly masculine power figures, the encouragement of violence on femmes and the diminishing of femme voices. As a result, we see masculine domination in these spaces which transforms them from fighting for "liberation and justice for all" to liberation and justice for cis straight men.

The external factors of misogyny remain the same throughout all spaces, but the internal factors, or the activists, unique to each space ultimately determine the transformation. Alternatively, the rise of misogyny affecting a femme dominated space may make them more protective and a closer-knit community.

Our beliefs dictate the power given to external factors. Educating ourselves; surrounding ourselves with a community that we feel responsible for and in turn is responsible to us; prioritizing humanity over comfort; these things all go into play with our response to difficult circumstances arising, and in turn how we are able to change them for the better.

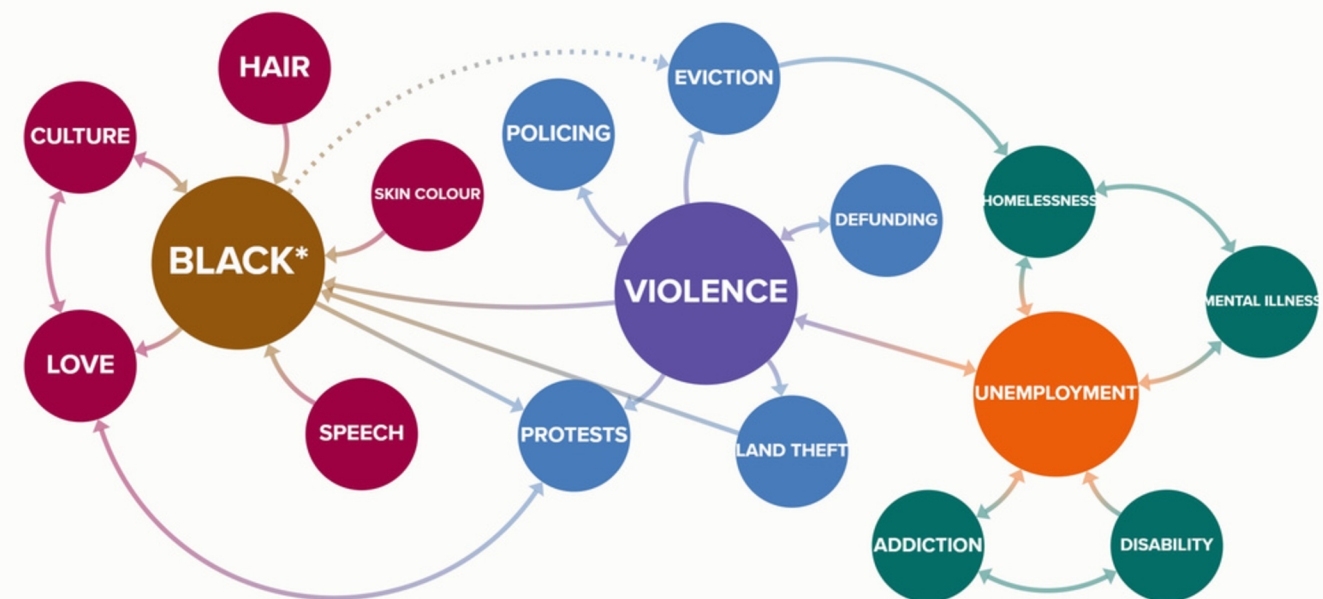
Black Nation



Mug Shot of Assata Shakur

We need to be weapons of mass construction, weapons of mass love. It is not enough to change the system. We need to change our selves. - Assata Shakur

What does building a Black Nation mean? It is easy to criticize from the title alone that this infers an ethnostate, but the meaning of the "Black" person goes much deeper.



As stated in the BLA study guide, Black does not only refer to African Americans, but "any person of colour engaged in revolutionary work around the world". Blackness is a social construct that determines how you will be mistreated. Being Black, in any part of the world, means to be at the bottom of the caste. It means you are oppressed for your appearance. You are exposed to violence in all of its forms. Refer to the diagram above for a visual representation on how a capitalist system enacts violence on Black people.

Black Nation

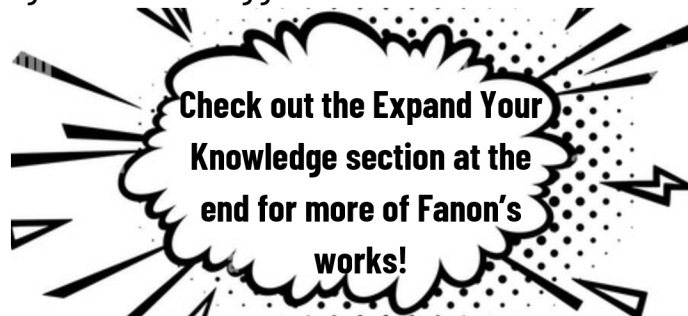
The true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality [...] We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force. – Che Guevara



Alberto Korda's 1960 portrait of the 31-year old Che Guevara has become an iconic symbol of counterculture

The Black Nation is essentially a community based on love that removes all capitalist violence from their society. Following this model, everyone has a place to live, food to eat, and access to education and healthcare - all necessities which a capitalist state defunds because they are unprofitable.

Unfortunately, the material powers of the ruling capital class are much greater than those of us who aim for liberation. They own the weapons, the military and police forces, even our homes. Consequently, Franz Fanon said that "The oppressor will never back down unless faced with a violence greater than his own". Historically, the only way liberation was possible was through armed struggle. For this reason, militancy was at the core of the BLA's beliefs.



Joseph Stalin's definition of a nation requires a "stable community of people formed on the basis of common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture." — Marxism and The National Question, Stalin

Where do you start?

Organize with fellow community members to fill the community's needs!

You don't need to invent anything new, take a look at what those before you did. The Black Panther Party organized many free programs for their community including (but not limited to) food, dental, optometry programs, clothing and furniture drives, as well as transportation to prisons.



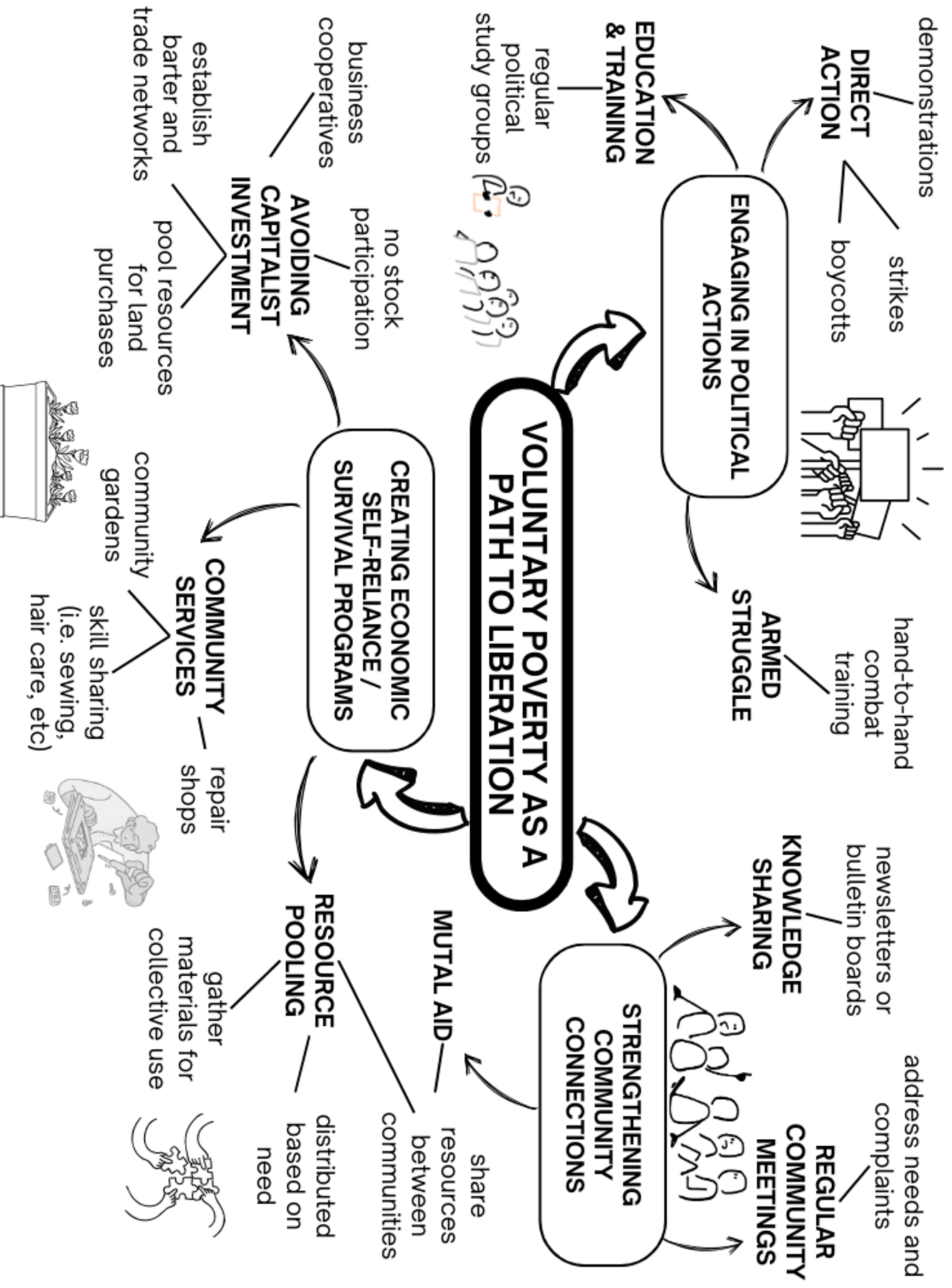
Check out
<https://bppaln.org/>
programs for more
information!

Here are some local examples of what is being done today, in the GTA:

- Harm Reduction Advocacy Collective protested at Queen's Park Legislature to disrupt a bill passed shutting down supervised consumption sites.
- Food Not Bombs Toronto distributes fresh produce and food weekly in Allan Gardens. A Queer group in Scarborough part of Underhoused Liberation does food distribution for the community and unhoused people.
- A Dutty Boukman Book Club gathers monthly to discuss black literature. Teach ins are hosted by similar organizations to further education!
- Jane and Finch Action Against Poverty speaks out against the changes made to the TTC bus route that makes public transportation inaccessible.



Use the mind map on the next page as a starting point: is there anything listed here you have the means to contribute to?



What happens if there is an argument?

As a collective we strive to make the least amount of mistakes. That being said, when mistakes occur, there is an effective way to discuss this.

start here

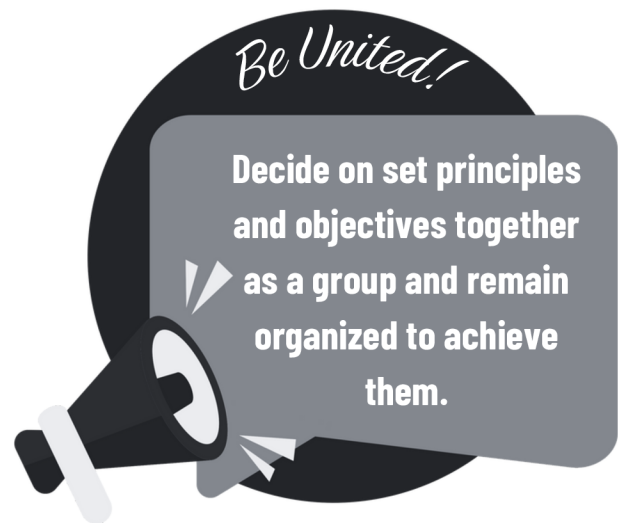


1-on-1 Dialogue

Discuss with Member Directly

Explain how an action or something the member said does not align with the collective's goals.

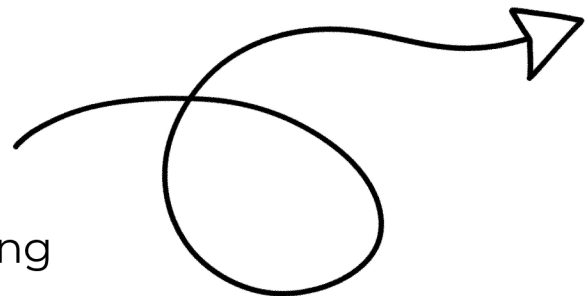
If this works, great! If not, move to group dialogue.



Group Dialogue

Bring the criticism before the collective

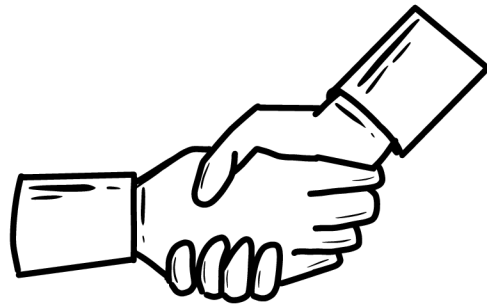
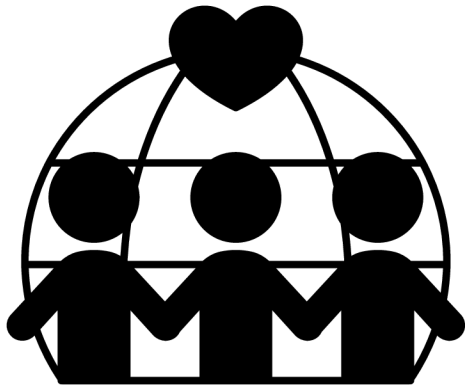
1. Avoid opportunism, subjectivism, and errors from objective causes.
2. No name-calling or disparaging remarks about the individual.
3. Criticism must be dealt with its own merits, so do not bring up other unrelated items to amplify the criticism.



Resolution

Criticism is resolved when one of the following occurs:

- The criticized acknowledged their error is committed to adhering to collective's principles and objectives
OR
- The collective agrees the original criticism is invalid
OR
- A point in between is reached



Glossary:

- opportunism: acting in your own interests at the expense of the collective's objectives
- subjectivism: committing an act that stems from a personal flaw like childhood trauma or religious superstition
- errors from objective causes: when someone acts without all the information, or places too much emphasis on the wrong elements

Further Your Education

Many of these readings can also be found as audio files on various platforms. Host listening parties or reading circles and discuss what actions can be applied from the concepts you learn.

On Anti-Colonial Armed Struggle

- *The Wretched Of the Earth* - Book by Frantz Fanon
- "Message to the Black Movement: A Political Statement from the Black Underground" from the Black Liberation Army - can be found as a 27 page text on internet archive or as an audio on Spotify from Pen and Paper: Library of a Pan African Communist



On Class Structures:

- Read This To Get Smarter - Book by Blair Imani - Chapter 3 "Get Smarter about Class" pages 57-76

On Building a Community

- Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur - can also be found in audio recordings from Pen and Paper: Library of a Pan African Communist
- Read "The Black Panthers: Ten Point Program" (3 pages)

No one is going to give you the education you need to overthrow them. Nobody is going to teach you your true history, teach you your true heroes, if they know that that knowledge will help set you free.

Assata Shakur

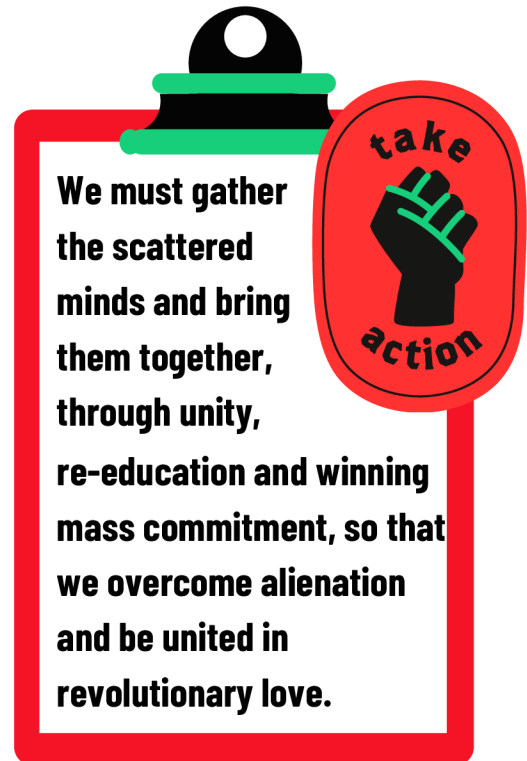
Further Your Education

Terms to discuss with comrades:

- Black and New Afrikan
- Bourgeoisie, proletariat and individualism
- Colonialism, capitalism, and racial capitalism
- Cadre, revolution, and revolt
- Constructive criticism vs. irresponsible criticism and self-criticism
- Unity-criticism-unity
- Voluntary poverty
- Dialectics and materialism
- Democratic centralism



@allpeoplesfightingoppression
@aduttyboukmanbookclub
@hac_toronto
@toorntoindigenoussharmreduction
@sudan.updates
@davenportaidbrigade
@davenport4palestine (find your riding!)
@red_maat
@lorrainelamchops
@ismatu@gwendolyn (also on threadings)
@praxis_archives
@climatejustiecto
@the519



@cf____to (community fridges toronto)

@foodnotbombsto

@parkdalefoodbank

@congofriends

@blackcreekcollective

Out of the Cold Meal Program at Saint Lukes:

VolunteerSaintLukesTo@gmail.com



SUPPORT THE



Justice Will Not Come Until
the People Rise Up And See Justice Done

BLACK LIBERATION ARMY

ALL POWER



**TO THE
PEOPLE**

**THE JOB OF THE CONSCIOUS IS
TO MAKE THE UNCONSCIOUS
CONSCIOUS.**

~KWAME TURE

